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342 The inmates do not bestow noticeable effort or care on their
571 paltry hut, either in building it or while they are living in it, for it serves but a few hours or days for their most urgent requirements for protection against the inclemency of the weather. One must by no means believe that the Indian strives for coziness or agreeable comfort in his hut. No, it serves merely as a meager cover and at the same time to keep the indispensable fire going. Beyond that, the things that Europeans consider necessary in a dwelling would only mean needless expenditure of energy and an unnecessary burden to the Yamana, for he must constantly carry all his belongings along with him. Indeed, he dare not part with them.

1. The Lack of Permanent Settlements

361 Since there is no other way for the natives of Cape Horn to obtain food except by hunting and gathering, all members of the tribe are divided up into individual families, and as such they go forth to hunt for food. Only occasionally a few band together. This manner of obtaining food prohibits a village settlement with many people.

484 Obtaining food is the chief concern of the man. Distant and
571 sometimes futile journeys are necessary before he approaches rocks
361 on which seals are lying, or reaches cliffs in which cormorants nest, or finds mussel banks where gathering is worthwhile. He always sees himself at the mercy of the arbitrary, eternally restless waves and the constant shifting of winds. Despite the best intentions, despite the greatest exertion and extreme hardship, he cannot guarantee that he will attain his goal, keep on his course, and come back to the place from where his canoe trip started. The inescapable dependence on changing weather, which not infrequently hinders any kind of movement for several days, permits neither an ordered grouping of many people nor plans by the hunters to return to a permanent settlement. Anyone staying behind /369/ to wait for food that others were supposed to bring in would too often find himself exposed to starvation (3).

3. These decisive factors have been overlooked by those European critics who, misconstruing the facts, have judged our natives to be backward

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because they do not build fixed dwellings or permanent settlements.

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Then, too, closer consideration of the game itself, upon which our Indian is after all dependent, would make the longer sojourn in compact settlements seem inadvisable. The animals change their location quite erratically. If they do favor certain places, they stay there only as long as man does not disturb them. Once they have been frightened away, it may be days before they have regained a feeling of security and settle down there again. Assuming, then, that many families wanted to live together on the same spot, this region would surely be cleared of all game within a wide radius, no matter whether it were killed or frightened away. Accordingly, the hunter would be obliged to venture ever farther from his camp in order to find his prey. Quite apart from his previous exertions, his return would be more difficult and more uncertain; those anxiously awaiting him would look for his return with greater worry. Only a short time might pass before a new camp, considerably distant from the previous one, would have to be sought.

With these brief comments, the advantages of freedom of settlement for independent individual families, in contrast to a longer residence of many people in the same place, become convincing. It is true, however, and this should be mentioned at the outset, that many families gather around a stranded whale and thus form a fortuitous settlement of limited duration. This exists, however, only as long as the supply of meat and fat holds out, for even a sea monster of such giant proportions as these largest mammals does not by any means supply unlimited quantities of food. This isolated occasion, besides one or two others of the same nature, proves how unsuitable fixed settlements would be as a permanent arrangement for our natives. It is to the advantage of all that their extensive homeland has few people, so that each individual family has a wide area open to it in all directions where its members can devote themselves undisturbed to food-gathering.

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Hence, the dwelling of the Yamana, in form as well as in construction and location, is a thing of chance. A person on a journey undoubtedly aims for a definite goal at which to land if the weather is good, but sometimes he does not attain it because good booty crosses his path along the way, because he is driven off his course in the pursuit of an animal, or because wind and waves are against him. After all,

342 /378 cont./
if many persons erect the ~~[illegible]~~ hut. Likewise, the covering and layers of earth, brushwood, or pieces of leather can be increased to obtain greater protection against strong winds, increasing cold, and heavy rain. Whatever the length of such a hut, the peak of the dome is never higher than 1.80 meters. In general the height of a single-family hut is around 1.75 meters; the width fluctuates between 2.60 meters and 3.30 meters. The low entrance permits only one person at a time to slide through sideways. When the hut is unusually elongated, an entrance is made on each of the two narrow sides; for a one-family hut, of course, the single entrance suffices (26).

26. The form and characteristics of Yamana dwellings have been more or less extensively described by Bove (c) :127 and (e) :157, Dabbene (b) :178, Despard (b) :880, Hyades (c) :363, L'Hermite:42, Lothrop (b) :127, Spegazzini (a) :178, and others. Cooper:193 has brought together the more important accounts.

3. The Hut as a Dwelling

342 571 Neither the conical nor the dome-shaped hut affords the Fuegian occupants complete comfort and convenience. It is far more a protection against the worst hardships of the weather and against the terrors of the night. A European acting as unprejudiced observer can best feel what discomfort and annoyance are connected with living in these cramped, poor dwellings (27). In the opinion

27. We must agree fully with the opinion of Lovisato (b) :133: "How very little protection this pretense of a dwelling offers the people, who in general are completely nude, resistant to all kinds of privation, and engaged in a continuous struggle to procure the necessities for their daily sustenance" /translated from Italian/.

/379 cont./

362 of the natives, however, this hardship does not by any means compare
571 with the unbearable misery that would result from a sojourn under the open sky. Thus, whenever external circumstances demand it, the natives build their hut, even during the severest /380/ storm, making it either more secure and durable as a dome-shaped dwelling or merely providing a light covering with the conical shape.

361 A family does not always have a choice of location. A sudden change in the weather or an accident will force them to make for shore without delay. In this case they must adjust themselves to the conditions provided by nature, perhaps even make do with a hasty shelter in a cliff. If they are not under pressure, they make a free selection according to the local weather conditions and the characteristics of the landscape (28). In general, however, everyone

28. When the Indian has a choice, he selects a sheltered spot for his hut. This is so generally true that Bove (MM.XVII, 234; 1882) believed he could go by it: "Generally the presence of wigwams indicates a locality sheltered from the coldest and the most frequent winds" /cited in English/.

stays on the dry gravel as close as possible to the highest water level. Their own comfort makes this strongly advisable, for all the utensils that a family carries along with them are dragged from the canoe to the hut. Packing and unpacking would be considerably more burdensome if the dwelling were far from the landing place. If they cannot build a hut for themselves, they seek cover and protection behind mounds of earth and low projecting rocks, at the foot of high rock walls, and at the edge of a forest. A hut is never placed deep in the forest because it is too damp there, but they like to stay under the broadest trees, which ward off rain and snowdrifts. If they are planning to remain only one night at a given location, they take a look at the weather to see if it will permit them to camp in a less protected spot. If not, or if they do not expect to travel on for a few days, a certain amount of caution is advisable. This explains why one finds just as many old campsites along the open, unprotected coast as in sheltered places farther back. An obvious preference is

/388 cont./

and finish, but is smaller. This separate hut for the children is usually built because of lack of space in the large hut, and it is always regarded as a necessary expedient, for parents do not like to be separated from their children unless it is absolutely necessary. Although the children stay by themselves several hours of the day and all night, they nevertheless like to be with their family a great deal, and they always have access to the large hut. An older woman takes charge of the small company and sometimes brings them a little food, but more often the children get their food from their own parents.

In exceptional cases, for instance, the illness of an older person, imminent confinement of the mother, and so forth, even the single family builds a separate hut for the children beside the one for the adults, much as they dislike to do so. This children's hut is an expedient, and the parents by no means decide on it because they do not wish to be disturbed by crying and noise, for Indian children as such are gentle and quiet.

Finally, if several families camp a few days in the same spot, the children as a game build a little hut with their own hands beside the dwellings of their parents. After all, they must occasionally give vent to their energies. The understanding parents willingly support them in this, sometimes bringing the children meat and approvingly watching the happy gathering. This children's hut is called ákáit. /389/ It is obvious and understandable that it cannot be an actual dwelling, but serves merely for the enjoyment and playful occupation of the little band (44).

44. This unequivocal appraisal of the so-called children's hut is absent in what Hyades (Q):342 and Bridges (A) :183 write about it. The latter is more ambiguous than the former.

If one stands in front of an Indian hut as a European judge, no matter which type of hut it is, one involuntarily asks himself: What protection does this poor makeshift afford? By nature our natives are extremely undemanding. If one would like definite proof of this, he need only observe them in their dwelling. If they have a little protection from the heaviest rainfall and the densest snowstorm, against the bitterest cold and the most

/389 cont./

342 611 devastating storm, they are content and uncomplaining, provided they are squatting beside their fire, to which they give all their attention. That is why they put something in front of the first entrance and open another one if the wind changes direction. To prevent the wind from coming through the walls, they pull larger pieces of leather over them, now here, now there, stuff up open places, and secure loose parts. If a big blast of wind tears down the whole hut, the people patiently await the end of the storm without any kind of cover, protected only a little by their meager clothing, provided their fire goes on after a fashion. The European has the impression, especially after having seen the living arrangements of the Selk'nam (Vol. I, 198) that the Yamana regards his hut more as a protection for his fire than for his own body.

The dwelling itself is neither cozy nor comfortable. As regards the desire of the members of the family to be peacefully together, they are, in any case, with each other on the trips in the open canoe. That is why they do not miss the hut during the day if the weather is reasonably quiet, and for the night they are content with the meagerness of their simple little hut (45). Their

45. The discomfort of the meager living arrangements was clearly described by Spegazzini (a) :171 from his own experience.

restless, wandering life forces them to renounce the amenities of more stable, secure housing (46).

46. Bove (c) :127 expresses himself in a similar fashion: "The poverty of their huts must be attributed to the nomadic life they are forced to lead" /translated from Spanish/.

342 Today throughout Yamana territory we find only one form of hut, namely, the loose cone-shaped type. It is only for the secret initiation ceremony that the elongated dome-shaped hut is built. Their contemporary hut does not even afford the protection

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women are like the vestals of old, and never allow the fire to go out in the frail barques" (MM:X, 20; 1876) /cited in English/.

B. Clothing

291 511 Since the time the Yamana became known beyond the borders of their remote island world, an amazing fact concerning them continues to be discussed in European circles to this day, namely, that they enjoy excellent health in their damp, raw homeland without any clothing and body covering to speak of. Every European is convinced that a human being under the weather conditions existing there must be dependent on very ample protection if he is to survive. Nevertheless, the short scrap of leather that the Fuegians hang loosely around their necks does not even deserve to be called clothing or body covering. All observers agree, and in their accounts express their astonishment in no uncertain terms, that the natives "ordinarily go about completely naked." These are also the specific words of one of the first missionaries, Aspinall: 270. Further documentation will be found below.

147 At the same time, observers recognize the healthy physical development and the great resistance of the natives, although they never describe the full significance of that most vital resource which is constantly at their disposal, namely, their open fire.

372 /400/ This fire more than compensates for the complete lack of protective body covering. An easily accessible stand of trees furnishes the required fuel for everyone. With it he can maintain a warm fire in the hut, in the canoe, in any open place, and at every campsite. The fire alone makes life possible in that region.

291 A short back-cape of skin is the only article of clothing, alike in shape and brevity for all sexes and ages. It is functional chiefly because it gives the comforting fire unobstructed access to the whole surface of the body.

291 881 In their manufacture of articles, our Indians are dependent primarily on furs and skins as their raw material. This is also true of the little that one might call their "clothing." A complicated method of preparation is not possible because there are no tools for it. Also, it would not be worthwhile because the high humidity

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12. Technical Skills

511 The material possessions of these southernmost Fuegians seem at first glance unusually frugal and poor. If we look more carefully, however, we are surprised at the considerable variety of implements and tools. Hence, our natives are not altogether destitute. In the variety of their utensils they without doubt considerably surpass the neighboring Selk'nam. The canoe alone is such an inestimably valuable means of transportation that it cannot be compared with travel on foot.

182 176 The environment into which our Yamana were placed was a good teacher. With their own resourcefulness and keen gift of observation, with the knowledge gained by experience through short, successive generations, they finally created weapons and tools of such high efficiency that it could hardly be noticeably increased within the possibilities of development originally afforded them. Anyone who will make an effort to gain an insight into the mechanics of each of the implements used by the Fuegians and the physical forces operating it will pay high tribute to their creative power.

Even Bridges (k):240 who was in a position to observe them for decades in closest proximity bowed to their ability, and offerred the following brilliant testimony, probably with not a little inner resistance: "The natives have evolved all the qualities most /509/ useful for the life they live; their canoes are perfect specimens of their kind and the same can be said of all their utensils and implements. With the material at their disposal I do not know how these could be improved. They are perfectly adapted to the soil and climate of the country in which they live" /translated from Spanish/. Behind the unprepossessing form and the pitiful simplicity of Fuegian implements is hidden an unsurpassed suitability.

463 In general each person makes what he needs in material possessions with his own hands and for himself alone. Exceptions are those things which, in the normal household life, are needed by the family or by the husband and wife equally, and which, accordingly, he provides for her and she for him. Manufacture is, therefore, an individual matter. There is no special class of

3: Lothrop E-5 (1924-1925) 1928
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as much as five feet below the surface. Here the housetop need scarcely have risen above the ground level, and the people within must have been snugly lodged against winter gales. But the swirling smoke was a constant annoyance, and many accounts speak of the Yahgans' red and inflamed eyes.

Initiation or ceremonial houses differed from the living houses chiefly in size. In the west they were domed and oval in outline, as shown in pl. XIV. In the east they took the form of a heavy solid tipi-shape dwelling of logs like the Ona initiation lodge (fig. 38).

Under mission influence the Yahgan in late years built small plank houses of European type. A group of these was found at Puerto Mejillones and Porto Piedra on Navarin island which were used as winter quarters (pl. XVIII). They were wind- and water-tight, and some had wooden floors, bunks, and stoves. The material for their construction was begged, stolen, or picked up on the beach.

Camp Equipment

Yahgan camp equipment, in spite of superior transportation facilities, was just as primitive as that of the Foot Indians, among whom every article, and the infants as well, had to be carried on the back. Strong and simple as are the objects below listed, they

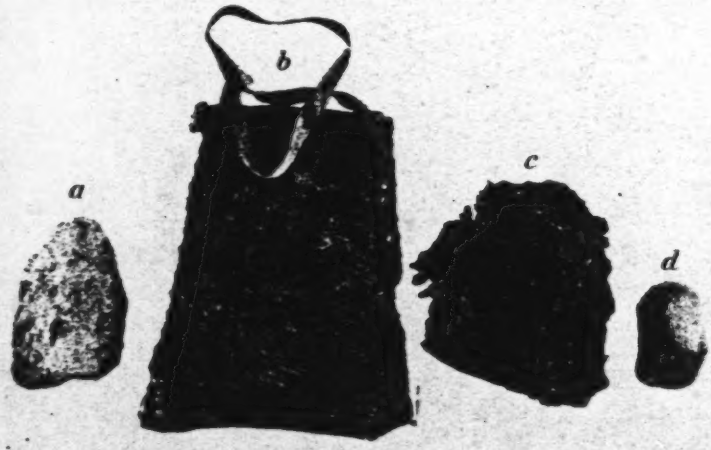

Fig. 53.—Yahgan fire-making apparatus. *a*, Flint; *b*, pouch; *c*, tinder; *d*, pyrites. Width of bag, 5 in. (14/2352)

3: Lothrop E-5 (1924-1925) 1928
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afforded a basis for little more than the mere act of existence and mutely testify to the cultural poverty of their makers.

1. FIRE-MAKING APPARATUS.—By all accounts the Yahgan rarely made fire, because they carried it with them on the hearths in their canoes. In their semi-nude society to lack fire might mean death, and so wherever they went they tried to husband a wisp of flame. When it was necessary to kindle a new blaze they used flint and pyrites (*s'wálli*) with dried fungus or down for tinder, after the fashion of the Ona. Various places in Fuegian waters where pyrites can be secured are mentioned on page 65; one of these, Merton island, lies in Yahgan territory. However, Rev. Thomas Bridges states that they got this material by trade with the Alacaluf, who obtained it on Clarence island. Especially fine flints were found in a valley called Aníawaía between Lapataía and Ushuaia. To protect the fire-making apparatus from the weather it was kept in a small hide pouch called *asánu* (fig. 53, *b*).

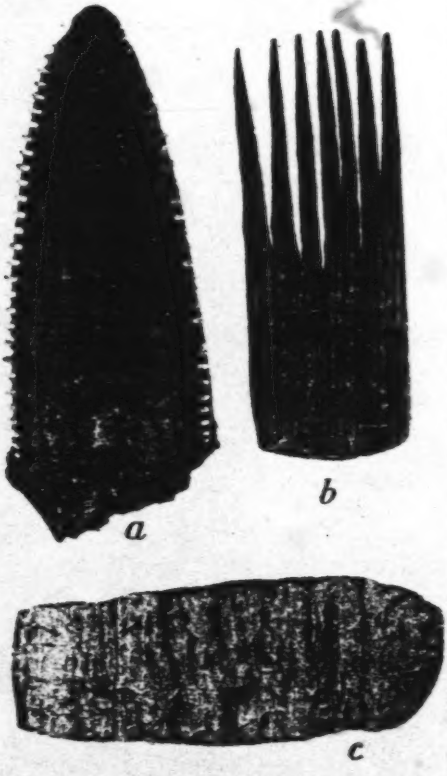

FIG. 54.—*a*, Porpoise-jaw comb; length, 6 in. (14/2370). *b*, Whalebone comb; length, 5¼ in. (14/2374). *c*, Seal-throat pouch; length, 8½ in. (14/2369)

2. FIRE-TONGS. — For tending the fire and for removing the objects from it the Yahgan used tongs. These are no more than a stick an inch or so in diameter and a couple of feet long, split for three-quarters of its length. Cultural borrowing is indicated by the name of this implement—*láka* in Yahgan,